

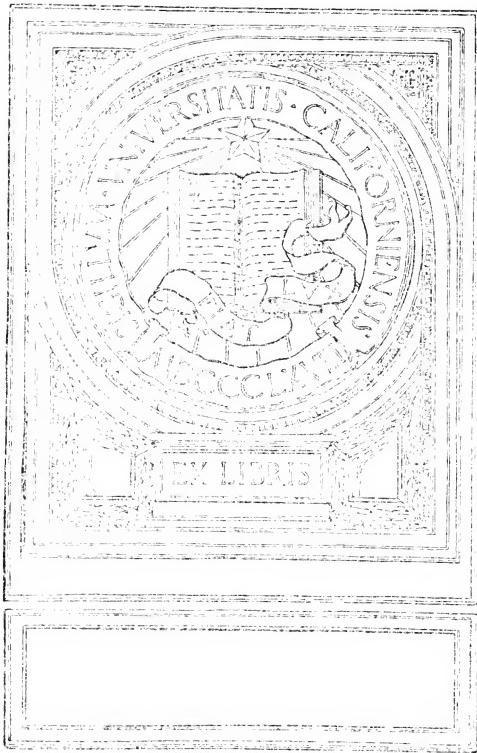
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PAESTUM  
3 OTHER POEMS

ALEXANDER BLAIR THAYER



Elizabeth Schenck

1909



**PAESTUM**  
and Other Poems



# PAESTUM

and Other Poems

By ALEXANDER  
BLAIR THAW

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*To my Wife  
Florence*

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## PAESTUM.

---

STILL, Paestum, on thy lonely shore  
The long waves break. Ah would, once more,  
Out of that ocean's foam  
The great sea-god might come,  
Now, as of yore !

Here on thy plain of shifting sands  
This shrine, the first that mortal hands  
Built by the Western sea,  
Full of strange mystery,  
All silent, stands.

Thy temple builders all are gone ;  
Darkly the Western sea rolls on :  
Still, in this flower-strewn space  
Of grass, thy temples face  
East, and the dawn.

Thy worshippers are fast asleep,  
And, where thy city was, the sheep  
Feed midst those strange, pale flowers,  
Which through thy dreaming hours  
Their long watch keep.

And as the seawind, rising, swells,  
Thy spirit wakes. The asphodels  
Whisper thy dreams ; there pass  
Dim shadows o'er the grass :  
By such strange spells,

Back through the open gates of death  
Thy spirit freely wandereth ;  
And from far ages past  
Blows, through the years, at last  
A living breath.

This is no wanton Southern breeze,  
But on our hearts, and o'er thy seas,  
Sweeps the fierce gale that once  
Brought hither first the sons,  
And songs, of Greece.

Sailors and traders from all parts  
Of that young world, they brought the arts  
That ever shall endure  
While burns youth's ardent, pure  
Fire in young hearts.

With them came those bright gods, to aid,  
And goddesses : for whom they made  
Shrines on this alien shore,  
Where yet no man before  
Aspiring, prayed.

Where the great sea-god's steeds of war  
Fling their white line of foam afar,  
And thick sea-mists arise,  
Blotting from thy clear skies  
Each guiding star,

Fearless the sons of Hellas roam,  
And follow still that line of foam,  
Past many perilous coasts,  
Till in this land their hosts  
Found a new home.

Athené, with the arts of peace,  
Bringing the olive, gave increase  
To all her sons, whose toil  
Should sanctify the soil  
Of this new Greece.

Paestum, eternal youth was thine,  
Whose children from the Achæan line  
Of Argos had their birth,  
And shared the might and mirth  
Of gods divine.

For centuries endured thy youth,  
And knew no sorrow, save in sooth,  
Such shadows as presage  
The coming on of age,  
That knows no ruth.

Thy sons, whose faith these temples made,  
Facing the East, with death's dark shade  
Went forth, to dwell among  
Those heroes Homer sung,  
All unafraid.

Thy daughters worshipped without fear  
Demeter wandering, far and near,  
Those fields of asphodels  
Where her lost daughter dwells :  
And twice each year

Thy roses bloomed !<sup>1</sup> Thy maidens wrought  
Late wreaths for her as still she sought,  
O'er the wide earth, her child  
Who, with each spring, the wild  
Spring roses brought.

Thy virgins worshipped, without shame,  
That sea-born goddess, at whose name,  
Within love's frightened eyes,  
Under thy sunlit skies,  
Love's first hope came.

And when Poseidon angry grows,  
Safe from old ocean still, thy rose  
Puts forth her fragrant leaf ;  
And thou art free from grief,  
Safe from all foes.

\* \* \* \*

Safe ! O alas ! Down on their knees  
Thy sons who ruled o'er this new Greece  
Now bend, with bitter tears  
Weeping their long lost years  
Of power and peace.

Forth from the mountains come fierce waves  
Of savage men ; and no god saves  
Thy children from their hands,  
E'en where this temple stands  
To dwell as slaves ;

Who, grateful for their captors' scorn,  
Come yearly now, a band forlorn,  
To sing the mighty songs  
Of old ; and their new wrongs,  
Mutely, to mourn.<sup>2</sup>

And now ! The singers all are dumb ;  
Though vainly still their children thrum  
The broken strings. And yet,—  
That Song,—who shall forget !  
The bees still hum

On steep Hymettus as of yore,  
And hark, along thy lonely shore,  
Float far off melodies  
Up from the distant seas,  
As once, before !

Still shines the same bright sun that shone  
That morning o'er the Parthenon,  
When, taking wisdom's vows,  
Men built Athené's house  
In that first dawn ;

And Phoebus brought the gift of song,  
That joined all Hellas, one glad throng  
Where, on the Delphic slope,  
The fire of human hope  
Burned clear and strong.

Cold are thine altars ; yet the same  
Spirit abides within that flame,  
Which in thy shrine was lit,  
Or in our hearts hath writ  
Some holy Name.

Far o'er the Western seas that beat  
On shores unknown to thee, our feet  
Have brought us to that place,  
Where in the end the ways  
Of all men meet,

And women's hearts. Though now we roam  
O'er wider seas, that line of foam  
Reveals the storm-swept shore  
Where we must build once more  
Thy spirit's home.

Beyond the dim Hesperides,  
Or where, in yon dark Western seas,  
Thy golden sun hath set,  
For ever wandereth yet  
Thy soul, O Greece !

*TO SHELLEY AND KEATS IN ROME.*

---

TWIN sons of sky and earth, like that great pair  
Who last were seen of mortals, watering  
Their steeds, at dawn, by Vesta's temple stair !  
Three columns watch by Rome's once sacred spring,  
Where still their altar stands, inviolate  
Amidst a world of ruin ; where mosses cling,  
And those sweet ferns which now we consecrate  
Unto the name of Venus, virgin, pure ;  
On whose high worship, still, your twin souls wait !

We spoil her sacred springs. Yet shall endure  
Beauty on earth, and in that ocean's spray  
Which in great waves of grief swept over your  
Young lives,—till, rising from the foam that lay  
Upon your drownéd lips, she had new birth,  
Breathing your songs. And still, beneath the sway  
Of that great goddess, smiles the fruitful earth,  
Since, on the wind-swept shores of Greece, she rose  
Before men's wondering eyes. Darkness and dearth  
Fly from her face ; who yet shall bring strange woes

To all, among her mortal worshippers,  
Who seek to see her. Still the worship grows,  
And since your yearning spirits caught from hers  
Some living secret, seeing in your dreams  
That power of awful loveliness which stirs  
Deep at life's heart, with swift, revealing gleams  
Of her shy beauty, still she comes to you,  
By desolate seas, and on the running streams  
Among the mountains,—and in fire and dew.  
She comes in clouds, storm-driven, fierce lightnings  
Revealing her, in visible might, even through  
Tempest and thunder filling the far springs  
Of earth, with the sweet rain, and the dim air  
With her bright veil of light,—wherein all things  
Are clothed, as with her raiment. But you share  
Some part of her deep spirit, whose dread power  
Stirs in your hearts until they break, and bear  
Fruit in your songs; wherein her thoughts, that  
flower  
In simple Beauty, ripen to that Truth  
We live upon. Though daily we devour  
This fruit, yet Time, and Change, that knows no ruth,  
Find at its heart a living seed there lies,—  
And in your songs there dwells eternal youth.

The coming generations, as they rise,  
Feed on such living truth as you have sung;  
And still the name of Keats, beneath the skies,  
Is like a seed, by running waters flung,

Whereof new flowers shall blossom to the end  
Of all the years, to keep the world's heart young.

And thou, whose heart, uplifted to defend  
That name, Love gave strong wings, and grace to reach  
Life's farther freedom, mourning for thy friend !  
Forth from thy heart, on earth's bare, sterile beach,  
Grow flowers of fire ; and o'er the world there flies  
Love's fire-born, fertile pollen, as, on each  
Wild wind that blows, still from that pyre arise  
Thy deathless ashes, filling all the air,  
Yet no more sure than love to find where lies  
That other flame, though seeking everywhere.  
But thy words, Shelley ! are as bees, that strive  
To pierce the heart of Beauty, and to bear  
Sweet burden back for all our swarming hive.  
Even so, like bees, all unaware they bring  
To every open flower, each soul alive,  
Through all the world, on swift, untiring wing,  
That wonder-making thought which thou hast heard  
Her flower-like lips to utter. Thou dost sing  
The song of silent hearts, and with a word  
Waken the seeds of life ; O, not in vain  
We still await the touch of power that stirred  
Life into being first. In the sweet strain  
Of thy swift, poignant music, Liberty  
Is born, breathing great gasps of life, through pain  
Of mortal labour brought to light ; that we  
Who bear the sorrows of the pregnant earth

May join in her rejoicing, and go free  
Beneath the open sky. Sharing sweet mirth  
With her bright, soaring birds, thy soul doth sing  
Liberty ! Through fiery pangs of birth,  
In that one word, the far, foreshadowing,  
Dim thought of love in earth's deep spirit thrills  
To life, upon thy lips, awakening  
The sacred streams, which, pouring from the hills  
Of her sweet bosom, ever fresh arise,  
To feed her child of love,—which she distils  
Deep in her mother heart. Beneath dark skies  
Thy spirit saw the light that comes before  
The dawn ; to earth's faint, distant, low replies  
Thy heart hath ever listened. Hark once more  
The soul of Adonais, calling thee  
Forth from the deep, back to this earthly shore !

O, hear that cry ! Beside the wintry sea  
We watch thy promised coming of the spring,  
When mortal loveliness, with liberty,  
Immortal, joins. O, brave companioning !  
Kissed by the warm west wind, his earthly flowers  
Come forth amidst the sand. On level wing,  
Twin messengers of peace, with unseen powers,  
On your great quest you come ; and, side by side,  
Still lead the way in this strange war of ours.

Like those great brothers twain who once did ride  
Before the Roman legions, lead us on

Through the thick dust of battle ! O, still guide  
Our steps through the long day ! The night is gone ;  
The stars are fading in the azure dome ;  
And freedom, with the coming of the dawn,  
Gives you her greeting on the hills of Rome.

THE CHRISTMAS TREE.

---

WANDERING tribes now roam  
The hills of Lebanon,  
Knowing not house nor home ;  
Gone the great cedars, gone  
That temple built of them  
Once, in Jerusalem.

Once, through the groves of Greece,  
Down from the Delphic slope,  
Rang their great songs of peace,  
Filled with a burning hope,  
Bearing strange prophecy  
Of mortal liberty.

Once our forefathers heard,  
Under the sacred oak,  
Some strangely muttered word,  
Whispered by tongues that spoke  
Forth from the Druid tree,  
Darkly, of things to be.

Though to our senseless ears  
The leaves no longer sing,  
Yet, through the lapse of years,  
A still small voice doth bring  
Peace upon earth again,  
And freedom to all men.

Set on a little hill,  
Over a world that grieves,  
One living tree shall still  
Scatter its healing leaves,  
Gathered for our distress  
Out of the wilderness.

Out of the desert wild  
Comes, with a heavenly voice,  
News of a new-born child,  
Bidding the world rejoice,  
Bringing all those who roam  
Back to each earthly home.

Now all the fruitful earth  
With heaven is reconciled,  
Since, on each sacred hearth,  
And in her forests wild  
Under the open skies,  
Songs of pure love arise.

Close by the tree of life  
The tree of knowledge grows ;  
And, through our wars and strife,  
Up from the world's deep woes,  
Where the dark roots entwine,  
Is born the Word divine.

Out of much suffering  
Still those mute altars rise,  
Where perfect love shall bring  
Life's willing sacrifice,  
And little children bear  
Earth's holy promise there.

Now, through the least of these,  
Heaven on earth is come ;  
Now the dark forest trees  
Speak, and no more are dumb,  
And a child's heart shall be  
Fruit of this fertile tree.

Hark, in this burning bush,  
Brought from the silent grove,  
Out of that holy hush  
Wakens the word of love,  
Which o'er the world, new-born,  
Hovers, this happy morn.

## THE SONG OF THE RIVERS.

THE words of the wind and the trees  
Shall be heard by the dreamer of dreams ;  
But the voices of fountains and streams  
Ever echo the sound of the breeze,  
And the heart of the silent wood  
Cries aloud in the rivers at flood.

Hark to the song of the rivers  
As they sing on their way to the sea,  
As they tell of the things that shall be !  
Tellers of visions they are, great givers  
Of life to each mortal thing.  
Oh, hark to the music they sing !

How they go on their way with rejoicing ;  
Bright daughters are they of the sun,  
Ever growing in strength as they run ;  
As they flow on forever, still voicing  
Vague secrets of death and of birth  
Which they brought from the womb of the earth !

Hark, the wild music that swells  
From the heart of the sacred wood !  
Where the tree of the knowledge of good  
And of evil is growing,—where dwells,  
In the leaves of the living tree,  
The lone spirit of prophecy.

All faint were those whisperings  
By the leaves of the forest first spoken ;  
But their promise ne'er shall be broken,—  
For they gave to the listening springs  
Life, with strange powers to fulfil  
The might of the forest's will.

### THE PASSING OF THE FOREST.

---

As long as the forest shall live,  
The streams shall flow onward, still singing  
Sweet songs of the woodland, and bringing  
The bright, living waters that give  
New life to all mortals who thirst,—  
But the races of men shall be cursed.

Yea, the hour of destruction shall come,  
To the children of men in that day  
When the forests shall pass away;  
When the low woodland voices are dumb;  
And death's devastation and dearth  
Shall be spread o'er the face of the earth.

Avenging the death of the wood,  
The turbulent streams shall outpour  
Their vials of wrath, and no more  
Shall their banks hold back the high flood,  
Which shall rush o'er the harvests of men;  
And, as swiftly receding again,

Lo ! after the flood shall be dearth,  
And the rain no longer shall fall  
On the parching fields ; and a pall,  
As of ashes, shall cover the earth ;  
And dust clouds shall darken the sky ;  
And the deep water wells shall be dry.

And the rivers shall sink in the ground,  
And every man cover his mouth  
From the thickening dust, in that drouth ;  
Fierce famine shall come ; and no sound  
Shall be borne on the desolate air  
But a murmur of death and despair.

IN THE GIANT FOREST OF THE SIERRAS.

---

YE first of living things !  
Ye that were goodly trees  
When the great King of Kings,  
Building his garden wall,  
Brought down to Babylon,  
Upon her streams, the tall  
Cedars of Lebanon.

Ye mighty trees !  
Ye which are first, of all  
Kings of the wildwood !

Over the earth and seas  
Here we are come at last,  
Weary with wanderings,  
Down at your feet to fall ;  
Here, by your mountain springs,  
Silent and all alone,  
Through the long ages past,  
High on your granite throne  
Ye stood in your glory.

Mighty ye grew in girth,  
Brother by brother  
Bending your mighty knees  
Down to the lap of earth,  
While the great mother  
Still to your listening ears  
Whispered her story,  
Tales of our wandering years,  
Tales of our childhood.

Here on the mother's lap,  
When earth was young,  
Your slender rootlets clung,  
Like tender fingers pressed  
Close to her maiden breast ;  
Then first the living sap  
Leaped from her bosom.

Now you are mighty trees,—  
Full forty centuries  
Past, since that morn,  
When on these stony hills  
Bloomed your first blossom.

Led by your mountain rills,  
We greet you, great brothers, first-born  
Of our mother, the earth !  
Here, in the heart of the hills,

Where you dwell  
And forever have dwelt,  
The great mother first felt  
Through her virgin repose  
    The quickening spell  
    Of your birth.

And under the snows  
Of these hills of her breasts,  
    Where they rise,—  
Where they lift their pure crests  
    To the skies,—  
Deep under the ground,  
Where your strong roots are wound,  
    Her delicate veins  
With your growth have grown ;  
    And they swell  
With the coming of life to these hills  
    Where you dwell,  
With the sweep of the life-giving rains  
Which her passion distils  
    From the pure, sunlit heavens above her.

Speak to us. Tell  
Of the secret of life that is hers ;  
    How it stirs  
In her breast that was stone ;  
    How it springs  
Into life in the heart of all things,  
    As the strength of the sun, her great lover,

Softly steals her white garment away,  
How her passion pours out the sweet rain,  
Far and wide, over valley and plain,  
From the darkening storm-clouds that cover  
Her breast from the bright eye of day,  
As a veil which the sky's fairest daughter,  
Who was born of the foam of the seas,  
From her birthplace the ocean has brought her  
On the wings of the westerly breeze.

Ye guardians who treasure  
The gracious gift of rain,  
And still pour forth again,  
Age after age, and year on year  
In bounteous measure,  
Your everlasting fountains !

Up to these mountains,—  
Where evermore you stand,  
Great sentinels  
O'er all this virgin land,  
Guarding your sacred wells,—  
We come, to drink of these.

O, ye great trees !  
Who lift your lofty forms,  
And gather earth's increase,  
And reign in endless peace  
Through all the centuries,  
Amidst the passions of her storms !



# AN INAUGURATION ODE

*(Dedicated to the American People)*

C



AN INAUGURATION ODE.

---

UNDER this banner of ours, unfurled  
To the winds of the world,  
    We, by God's grace,  
Citizens, Sovereigns, lords of this land,  
    Fixing on you for our choice,  
    Give you, this day, high place.  
And the nation's voice,—  
    With a solemn roar  
Like the murmur of wind in the trees,  
With the might of the surge of the seas  
    As they break on the shore,—  
Gives unto you, to command  
    Over our armies of peace,  
And over our servants, who stand  
    At watch in the house.

Solemn and mutual vows  
    We make this day ;  
To defend our fair temple of state,  
To protect the pure spirit of laws,

To watch and to pray  
Against treason, within and without :  
    Within,—for the fate  
Of all our unborn generations  
    Hangs on these vows we make ;  
Without,—for our cause,  
    And this oath which you take,  
Are the promise of peace to the nations.  
    For our war  
    Is the fight against war,  
And the strife against wrong ;  
The battle of youth with doubt,  
    Of life with death.  
    And our song  
    Is the battle shout  
Of a mighty army of peace ;  
    The living breath  
Of new-born harmonies,  
    That shall be sung  
    In every human tongue.

This is the oath you take,  
As you take up the fight against wrong :  
    To defend,  
    Even unto the end,  
This, our cause ; this, the creed  
    We confess,  
That Justice and Mercy endure,  
    With righteousness ;

And naught else is sure,  
And naught less !  
Though men say  
These are dreams, foolish dreams ;  
Though the way  
Through the desert still seems  
Blind, perilous, wearily, endlessly long,  
Shall the dust, that we raise  
With our feet on the long trodden ways  
Shut out all the light of our days ?  
Are we lost then, indeed ?  
Shall no leader be found, in our need ?  
Is this then our life, evermore to rehearse  
Those tales that are told  
Of the people of old,  
Who were faithless, perverse,  
And worshipped strange gods, which they  
wrought  
With the work of their hands !

\* \* \* \* \*

Oh ye,  
Ye who have climbed the heights and sought  
The Lord's commands,  
The table of that law which sets us free,  
And, coming from the mountain, as of old,  
Have found our god a beast, and made of gold,  
Lead us onward still !  
Give us strength that we,

Out of our very weakness and our fears,  
    Make strong our will ;  
That these weak hands of ours may yet fulfil  
The promise of the years ;  
And seize that kingdom, which by the Lord's decree  
Is ours to win ; that country you behold  
From lonely mountain heights, remote and cold !

Shall we, whose fathers dared to smite  
    From off their limbs and lives  
    Those galling gyves,  
    Forged in the night  
Of Europe's darkness, and fled  
    That ancient tyranny  
Of warring kings,—shall we not arise,  
    And cast from our eyes  
    Each subtle spell that blinds our sight ;  
    And, from our hearts, those ancient lies,  
    False visions of some earthly paradise ;  
    Those fetters of the soul that stay our might ;  
    Those flesh-pots of the mind ; that wandering light  
Which leads where no true hills of promise rise !  
    So shall we see,  
When the true vision is at last revealed,  
This is our portion in that promised land :  
A sacred soil, to till, a place to stand  
Against the Philistines ; a battle-field,  
Where we must fight and fall ; yea, hand in hand  
Fight on, to fall again,—but never yield.

Since we have shunned the shadows that are cast  
Upon the air, mirages of the sky ;  
    Since now at last  
The long, long dreary desert space is past ;  
Shall we in very madness, drunk with pride,  
    Set up base gods on high  
Within the market place ?  
    Or, seeking grace  
        To guide,  
And kneeling down, each man upon his hearth,  
Search for the living laws, where still they lie,  
    Scattered like seeds in the earth,  
    Till the children of men,  
Toiling beneath the sun,  
    Shall raise them up again,  
One by one.  
    As by a second birth,  
And make them whole at last !

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*

Now no more, as of old,  
Does the dust of our striving by day  
Fill the sight of our eyes  
With confusion, and mock us, and blind us ;  
Nor shut out the light of the sun  
Ere the day's work is done.  
For the wind of the Lord blows behind us,  
    And loud  
        Is the sound of it ;

And as it was writ,  
And the tale thereof told,  
See, the columns of dust that arise  
Are become as a pillar of cloud  
In the skies,  
To point our the way.

And our cup shall run o'er  
In the day of our need,  
And He shall restore  
And make whole,  
In us and our seed,  
The great living soul  
Of the teeming  
World, ever dreaming  
Of things that are to be.

The things yet to be,—  
Are the things we must do,  
To be constant and true  
To our vow.  
So, here and now,  
We bid you stand,  
Stand and receive the great oath,—to protect  
This fair temple of ours, which was planned  
Through the ages of ages,  
By the mind of the One  
Great Architect :

This dream of the prophets and sages,  
By whom the fair work was begun ;  
This house which was made  
By men's toil,  
And the work of their hands,  
Here under the sun ;  
This temple, which stands  
As a refuge for men of all nations :  
Whose strong foundations  
Forever firm are laid  
In the free soil  
Of the fertile earth,  
And in every heart, on every hearth,  
Where'er still burn the sacred fires  
Of liberty and brothers' love.

And this living wall  
Shall never move,  
These lofty towers  
Shall never fall,  
But by our guilt,  
And to our scathe,  
For behold, they are built  
Of the blood of our sons and our brothers,  
And the faith  
Of our mothers ;  
And their glorious strength ever rests  
In the graves of our sires,  
And in our daughters' breasts.

So this temple of ours,  
Which was made  
For a refuge for men,  
Shall become as a house of the Lord.  
So twice was it saved by the sword  
Of our fathers, who fell,  
In their faith's fierce endeavour,  
That men coming after might dwell  
Therein, unafraid,  
With justice and mercy, for ever.

LINCOLN'S BIRTH.

*Feb. 12, 1809-1909.*

LINCOLN ! Great Heart ! Again, and yet again,  
Across the years, we call upon that name.  
May your strong spirit keep us free from shame !  
Defender of the faith of all dead men

Who died for freedom ! Help us to defend  
That freedom with our lives, even to the end !

Yet, all these children, born of the same soil  
That nourished you,—you, from your mother's knee,  
With roots in the clean earth like a strong tree,  
Straight heavenward upsprung,—shall we despoil  
The children of their birthright ! Hark, O, hark !  
Those little ones, still crying in the dark !

Had every woman but her due reward,  
Each workman his just hire,—who then would kneel,  
And watch his children broken on the wheel  
His own hands turn ! O, give us grace to guard  
These little souls that sink beneath our laws !  
Call forth all mother-love to serve this cause.

If man's poor justice to this shame is blind,  
Bid love's pure wisdom, guarding still the door  
And gates of life, through all these states restore  
Our children's birthright ; bid love's justice find  
Our nation's heart : call forth that sacred band,  
That mighty host, the mothers of the land !

\* \* \* \* \*

Out from the love that bore you, through that voice,  
Which in our mothers' trembling souls awoke  
A spark of quickening fire, your great heart spoke  
Words that shall make all children to rejoice,  
So long as we are faithful, and shall still  
Your solemn spoken promises fulfil.

With smiling lips you gave us all your trust ;  
From your sad eyes no shame of ours may hide :  
For heavenly justice, lo, you lived, and died.  
Now, under God, and by the sacred dust  
Of those we mourn, help us to dedicate  
Our lives to our dear land all consecrate !

**WHEN CHAOS DWELT ON EARTH.**

---

WHEN chaos dwelt on earth, a mighty god  
Was born ; an infant god and blind. No gleam  
Of light was there ; and darkly, as a dream,  
Did life appear, and fearful shapes that trod  
One on another down into the sod,  
Whence others rose, a never-ending stream.  
And still great Love is blind, and life doth seem  
To come and go, while he, asleep, doth nod.

But lo ! that infant god who seemeth blind,  
He only from vain dreaming shall awake  
A wondering world. Oh, must we strive to break  
These bonds, whereby our vision is confined,  
Yet many weary years ;—or simply take  
The word of Love for all that lies behind ?

**TO THE GREAT GOD PAN.**

THOU ancient one of earth, thou god of all  
Who breathe, hear thou our cry ! Upon this crust  
Of crumbling earth we lie, as we were thrust,  
All naked, forth. On thy dark world we fall ;  
Around thine altar, infant-like, we crawl.  
Come forth from out thy groves ! Surely, thou must !  
We cannot see ; our eyes are filled with dust,—  
We hearken, trembling, for thine answering call.

We are but mortal, made of this bare mould  
Whereon we live, and die, and make our moan ;—  
Which thou hast heard, and on thy pipes hast blown  
Faint answering sounds ! Thy voice, now, as of old,  
Though seeming but an echo of our own,  
Remotest secrets of thy heart hath told.

## TO HOMER.

BLIND singer of the world's desire,  
Thy world is ours. Thy song Troy town  
Built, burned ; and then thy lyre  
Burst in a blaze of fire  
Seas shall not drown.

First kindled in a woman's eyes,  
Fire burned high Troy ; and beckoned men  
From home ; and from the skies  
The gods. Those flames yet rise,  
Years now as then.

Yea, now as then, the world's desire,  
Though hidden from us, still doth dwell  
In Helen's heart of fire,  
And breathes upon thy lyre  
Her mighty spell.

Against new gods we wage our wars,  
New cities build or burn with fire ;  
And still, beneath the stars,  
We beat against the bars  
Of blind desire.

Our world is thine. New wars we wage  
Under old skies. Our richest wine  
Hath savour of thine age :  
We write on life's last page ;—  
The book was thine.

Of life's brave book the leaves are turned,  
And as we read we wonder how  
Thy blinded eyes discerned  
Life's hidden fires,—that burned  
Even then as now.

Oh thou who first, when earth was young,  
Sangst fate defied and mortals slain,  
Upon that honeyed tongue  
How sweet thy songs, though sung  
Of mortal pain !

What songs have we thou dost not sing,  
What fates thy heart hath not foretold ?  
Breathe thou the songs we bring !  
Bees on thy mouth still cling,  
Now, as of old.

### THE SILENT HEART.

---

UPON what mortal lips this air hath stirred,—  
This air we breathe in laughter or with sighs,—  
In what immortal strains, or with what word  
Of life, that dies not though the sweet song dies !  
Though the bright morning stars in the still skies  
Stay their sweet singing, sphere answering sphere,  
Hush!—from the world's deep heart doth ever rise  
That song your silent hearts alone shall hear.

How long the stars for all the ages hurled  
Silent through space, while yet no mortal tongue  
Had told the secrets that the murmuring world  
Whispered her many children, as they clung  
Close to her bosom ! Ye whom fate hath flung  
Prostrate upon the ground ! Oh ye with ear  
Pressed close to earth, what music thence hath sprung !  
That song your silent hearts alone shall hear.

Beyond the sound of waters, when the sea  
Beats with a ceaseless thunder on the shore ;—  
And, with unmeaning moan, eternally  
The senseless passion of his life shall roar,

Raging in froth and foam, and evermore  
Make hollow sound ;—hark, to the listening ear  
Sweet siren voices on the wide air pour  
That song your silent hearts alone shall hear.

Though these were songs no man might hear, and live,  
What then ! Shall you, by fear of death deterred,  
Seek death in life ! Oh ye, who dare to give  
Life and the world, to catch one strain, unheard,  
Of more than mortal music ; which hath stirred  
Men's hearts, beyond life's hope, or death's dark fear !  
The world awaiteth still that magic word,  
That song your silent hearts alone shall hear.

Ye who, with silent hearts, shall venture where  
Those siren songs your very souls beguile,  
Shall not that spell, flung on the breathless air  
By lovely lips that sing and ever smile,  
Be very breath of life ? Oh, reconcile  
Your hearts to silence ! Your reward is near :  
Though you be bound with burning thongs the while,  
That song your silent hearts alone shall hear.

Ye who would know what many men have sought,  
In vain, or finding, found therein but death,  
Though you are bound with thongs that fate hath wrought  
Yet be not mutinous ! Lo, every breath

You breathe is life : whereof, what mortal saith  
It is a burden, his harvest falleth, sere,  
Ere it be ripe. And still life uttereth  
That song your silent hearts alone shall hear.

Winter comes soon and swift the year grows old,  
But ye whose hearts are still an hungering,  
Who, sowing, reap not, but with love untold  
Give all your treasure for love's offering !  
The very winds shall do your garnering :  
And while our harvests perish with the year,  
The seed you sow shall make another spring.  
That song your silent hearts alone shall hear.

Ye who, desiring much, have given more !  
Lo, all your harvest, on the wide air sown,  
The winds that scatter shall again restore,  
An hundred fold ; yea, and to you alone  
Shall be the secrets of the sweet earth known,  
Borne on this air, far sounding, faint and clear,  
In strains that Pan upon his pipes hath blown ;  
That song your silent hearts alone shall hear.

Among the groves, and up the mountain, still  
We follow, where you lead, with eager feet ;  
Yet hear we naught, though Echo from the hill  
Answer your hearts with music wondrous sweet.

But you go far, till at the last you meet  
The very soul of things ; as you draw near  
The world's deep joy within your hearts shall beat.  
That song your silent hearts alone shall hear.

## ENVOL.

YE who in silence suffer for love's gain,  
And swift surrender what you buy so dear,  
This is your gift, which princes seek in vain,—  
That song your silent hearts alone shall hear.

*TO F. T.*

How often, dear, since first our spirits met,  
But still in vain, my hand has tried to trace  
One living line of all the mystic grace  
And beauty that is thine! And I must yet  
Abide the time when I shall pay that debt  
Which I have owed to time since thine embrace  
First freed me from his hand, and in thy face  
I saw that light whose sun doth never set.

Blesséd the day when first I caught just one  
Dear look of thine, such as thy spirit fleet  
Clothes thee withal, as with the golden glow  
Of Love's far speeding but still constant sun.  
I am borne onward ;—till mine eyes shall greet  
The whole wide vision that my heart doth know.

## THE LIFE SPIRIT.

"And from the soul the body form doth take,  
For soul is form and doth the body make."

"*For earth that gives the milk the spirit gives.*"

WHOSE is the finger that gives form  
To everything that lives ?  
Whose mystic touch turns dark earth's dust  
To Beauty's flesh and blood ?  
Whose is the mind that made the Word  
By which a thought may live,  
Whose subtle breath shall make a child  
The prophet of all time ?  
Whose is the hand that marks the hours  
With the sharp knife of Time,  
And with our lives doth measure out  
The life of Time himself ?  
What is the force of awful change  
That brings sweet Life to death,  
And gently then, raising Death's veil,  
Hints larger life within ?  
Thy scarce seen footsteps mark the path  
To earth's own Paradise,

Thy heart-beat sounds the melody  
And measure of Life's song!  
Still let me ever live to be  
A servant at thy shrine,  
Kissing the feet that lead me on,  
The hand that bears the knife,  
Till, with my head close to thy heart,  
I catch the cadence deep, divine,  
Of earth's immortal strain.

**OUT OF THE SOUTH.**

Out of the South  
The singing bird  
Flies North,  
Seeking his mate.

Out of the mouth  
The wingèd word  
Flies forth,  
Beseeching fate.

In some far land,  
Unseen, unheard,  
The silent bird  
Sits brooding on her nest.

On some far strand,  
Though seas may part  
The silent heart  
Broods upon love confessed.

The cold wind blows  
Down from the North,  
From the land of snows ;  
The bird sings now as then.

But ah ! who knows  
What word comes forth  
From the land of woes,—  
Or when love comes again !

Let be, let be !  
Across the sea,  
With the dying year,  
The bird comes a-singing,  
    Ever South, ever South ;  
And she sings of her young that are fledged,  
And her mate  
That is fled !

Though the heart bear no young,  
Save the song that is sung,  
Hear, oh, hear !  
The words that go winging  
    From mouth unto mouth,  
The nurslings of love that were pledged  
Against fate,  
Are not dead.

TO POETRY.  
—  
I.

The love I bore all these to thee I bring,  
And with Love's harvest in my hand I wait,  
Content to kneel beside the outer gate  
Of thy dear shrine. And if thou, opening  
The door, shouldst bid me follow thee, and fling  
My little handful in,—or soon or late,—  
Lo ! it is thine. To thee is consecrate  
The last grain gleaned of love's own garnering.

Oh ! take the gift, and open wide the door :  
Pierce me with all the magic of thine eyes,  
And in mine ears thy deathless music pour !  
When this my heart within thy bosom lies,  
But one small seed is added to thy store ;—  
And thy rose-garden fills the farthest skies !

II.

AH ! hard it is to win thy meed of worth,  
The consecration born of service true !  
The sweetest flower that e'er thy garden knew  
From Life's dark bed and bosom had its birth :  
And who would serve thee well upon this earth  
The inmost heart of the world's life must woo,  
From Life's hot blood distilling purest dew,—  
Lest Love's bright arrows bring us woe and dearth.

I fain would serve thee well, with skill in craft  
To send each arrow singing to its aim.  
But, oh ! that some true breath of life may waft  
My words in secret ways, unknown to fame,  
So that to one warm heart some slender shaft  
Bear its swift message from Life's central flame.

## III.

CONDAMN me not that in my heart concealed  
One mighty love lies hid ; nay, though thy wrath  
Should stay my footsteps on thy garden path,  
The seed that blows from summer's richest field  
Springs where it falls : and so my heart must yield  
Some scant sweet harvest for Life's aftermath ;—  
Too warm to wait the winter's cold, it hath,  
Within thy walls, Love's living flower revealed.

Though buried deep beneath the winter snows  
Love's plant may perish not, but still persists,  
And through each seeming change of life must bring  
Forth seed, and increase in its kind. So grows  
The mystery more strange, while Love resists  
The hand of fate, and summer follows spring.

**CLOSE, CLOSE MY HEART.**

---

**CLOSE**, close my heart within thy heart hath lain,  
Some few brief days, some few sweet hours and brief.  
What fear we then of fate, that black-winged thief?  
Who feeds on lifeless seeds of scattered grain,  
Dead hearts, that ne'er have known love's burning pain,  
The birth of that new life, whose root and leaf  
And flower and fruit are ours ; yea, ours the grief  
Of fallen fruit, and tears that fall like rain.

Our souls, long severed, now shall never thirst.  
Since from our hearts, that long in silence sobbed,  
The very blood of love and life hath burst  
In one pure stream. Ah love, fate hath not robbed  
Us of love's fruit, and we are not accurst,  
Since deep within thy heart my heart hath throbbed.

### **LOVE THE GARDENER.**

---

THY beauty was a bud of Love's true graft,  
Flower-like of birth, as flooding all thy face  
The quick blood rushed to meet his swift embrace,  
When to thy heart, deep even to the haft  
He sent his piercing blade. Oh, perfect craft !  
That grievous wound hath added further grace  
To beauty's self ! And when he set that trace  
Of tears in those deep eyes the great god laughed.

The heavenly gardener gazed into those eyes,  
And in the look that lay there he hath known  
His master touch, the life that is his own.  
So, serving him, I too have looked where lies  
Thy beauty's source, reaping, where Love hath sown,  
The heavenly harvests from his wounds that rise.

## BY SOME LIGHT TOUCH.

By some light touch it was of your  
Strong, tender hands, and the strange lure  
In those deep eyes, and by the sound  
Of your sweet voice, that I was bound  
As by some spell, both fast and sure.

But since my heart you close immure  
Within the cloister of that pure  
White breast, you heal me as you wound,  
By some light touch.

And I would seek no other cure,  
Nay, in that prison, I abjure  
All freedom, since the way I found  
To win thy love, and power to sound  
Thy praise, in songs that *may* endure,—  
By some light touch.

### YOU WHISPERED, LOVE.

---

You whispered, love, in just one word,  
Secrets I long had passed unheard,  
Faint breathed within your garden close  
Far borne by each wild wind that blows,  
While I lived on with hopes deferred.

Long years in this cold heart interred  
Lay one deep mystery unstirred,—  
“As summer under winter’s snows,”  
You whispered, love.

You breathed upon me, and I heard  
The burden sung of Love’s sweet bird ;  
The secret of the budding rose  
Was mine : the rest—no mortal knows.  
You whispered,—“Love !”

## FOR YOU AND ME.

FOR you and me a happy lot  
Had been some little house, a plot  
Of pleasant flowers, and a wall  
Where vines should grow, and lizards crawl  
When summer suns beat down full hot.

There had we lived, and never sought  
To see beyond, and sighed for naught;  
No need of noble house nor hall  
For you and me.

If now beyond or crib or cot  
Our house be grown, sure, I know not  
Why griefs should grow, or pleasures pall,  
Because the roof-tree is so tall,  
Or hearts become less warm, God wot,  
For you and me!

LOVE'S BLIND EYES.  
—

ALL ye who would be great and wise,  
How many joys ye had not missed,  
Had ye but seen with Love's blind eyes !

But "joy possessed for ever flies!"  
On such vile doctrines you insist,  
All ye who would be great and wise.

Ye slay the hours as they arise ;  
Cold are the lips ye should have kissed,  
Had ye but seen with Love's blind eyes.

Slain by the spirit that denies,  
Love leaves you blind indeed. Oh, list,  
All ye who would be great and wise !

When ways are dark and daylight dies,  
Ye were not wand'ring in the mist,  
Had ye but seen with Love's blind eyes.

Your blindness lacks Love's swift surmise ;  
Ye come too late to Life's high tryst,  
All ye who *would* be great and wise,  
Had ye but seen with Love's blind eyes.

## TO THE "MAIDEN."

*A Statue by George Gray Barnard.*

WHAT hand ever made thee !  
Or what voice bade thee  
    Up from old earth to rise ?  
Where, till the night was gone,  
Still waited for this dawn  
    Those dreaming eyes.

Deep in the darkness bound,  
Sleeping beneath the ground,  
    Ages untold ;  
While the slow ages passed,  
    Round with the wide earth rolled,  
Darkly, alone,  
Still with strong chains of stone  
Wert thou held fast.

Say what strange mortal powers  
    Now have unbound thee ;  
That upon earth at last

Here we have found thee,  
Fairest of mortal flowers  
From earth upspringing !

Close, close unto earth  
With soft hands clinging,  
Tell us what secret birth  
Brought and is bringing  
Out of the dark of night  
Up from the weight of years,  
Thy flower-like body, white,  
And to our eyes, these tears,  
And to our hearts, delight !

Oh, never wast thou flung  
Down from the skies,  
Or from some distant sphere.  
But here,  
Here upon earth,—  
Whence like a flower thou art sprung,—  
Thou hadst thy birth !

Like the sap in the tree  
As it stirs,  
All her life is in thee,  
And all secrets of hers  
Become ours,  
Like the flowers  
That the summer hath brought.

For a mortal man sought  
In her heart and his own,  
And a mortal hand wrought  
Thy fair body in stone,—  
Till a vision of infinite beauty  
To our eyes hath been shown,  
In the light of thy face,  
And the passion of infinite power,  
Which in earth hath its root,—  
Hath borne fruit  
Of delight  
In thy delicate grace.

Like a rose  
But half budded,  
Thy body is flooded  
With life. Yea, the night  
Now is gone,  
And the light  
Of the heavens at dawn  
Through thine eyelids hath shone,  
As they close  
Like the leaves of the rose.

And the light that is thrown  
O'er thy body so pale  
Is a magical veil;  
And through that strange mesh  
Thy body of stone  
Is all wondrously grown

Unto flesh,—  
And immortally human.  
From thy prison  
Of stone  
Thou art risen,  
As a seed that was sown,—  
As a maid become woman !

## VENUS VICTRIX.

---

WHEN many years are gone of drought and dearth,  
Shalt thou not struggle to the light again  
From forth our mighty mother's breast? And when,  
Lying like us upon the lap of earth,  
We know thee daughter of our common birth,  
But beautiful, and free, how shall we then  
Still fear that chain, by which thou bindest men,  
Thy girdle woven of all woe and mirth?

And when from out thine opening eyes doth peer  
The wonder of all life, and through thy form  
Surgeth the sea of earthly passions' storm,  
Then shalt thou draw us to thy heart full near;  
No shame of ours thy beauty shall deform,  
And we, bound in thy toils, shall hold them dear.

TO "THE VENUS OF MILO."  
(*VENUS GENETRIX*).

WE dare not hope to reach thy lofty place,  
Nor with dark Fate to be quite reconciled.  
Thy seeming sightless eyes, benignly mild  
As of the early gods, or of some race  
Of men almost divine, look into space  
Beyond our mortal vision ; with no wild,  
Swift passion torn, so hast thou ever smiled,—  
Great love, immortal, lighting thy calm face.

Born of the womb of earth, who doth beguile  
Both gods and men to woo her, for all time  
Thou art a thing of worship. Ah, sublime  
Mother of men ! We may not reconcile  
The darkness with the dream ; yet still we climb  
The starlit heights to win thy sacred smile.

THE EARTH SONG.

---

EARTH sings her song ; wherein, if any sound  
Of seeming discord dwells, 'tis thus life shows  
The imperfection of each thing that grows.  
The sweetest fruit in all earth's garden found  
Was bitter once. Born from the blackest ground,  
And blooming on her thorny tree, the rose,  
The fairest flower that in the garden blows,  
Bears a sweet balm to heal life's deepest wound.

Though weary be our toil, our wanderings long,  
At last, concealed within life's fallen fruit,  
May fall some fertile seed, whereof shall shoot  
Life's healing flower, to make our faint hearts strong.  
The sweetest herbs have oft a bitter root,  
And out of grief shall rise our sweetest song.

## TO ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

THOU spirit strong, who late in English ships  
Didst bear our English tongue to the last reach  
Of this world's farthest sea, thou hast for each  
Live man of us pushed back the line where slips  
This self into the dark, as the sun dips  
Into the sea ; and set on that far beach  
A brave new standard for our English speech :—  
Or sounds the old so new upon thy lips ?

Like men of old, deep hast thou gazed within  
Thy soul ; aye ! deep within that fatal urn  
Where souls of men are made, where toss and spin  
The leaves of destiny. Yet thine eyes turn  
To us at last as with a child's calm gaze ;  
And little children wait on all thy ways.

## IN MEMORIAM.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

*(The Light-House Builder's Son.)*

BEHOLD ! a tower of light ! where stood before  
The flickering flame that led our fathers home.  
Then shall there be, upon the sea, no more  
Of faith in heaven's fires ; shall froth and foam  
And misty cloud for ever from our sight  
Conceal the stars and hide their heavenly light ?

Born of the blood of them who builded higher  
The house of light upon the homeward shore,  
Comes one with eyes far fixed upon that fire  
Which beckons ever on the deep ; once more  
On seas unknown we sail, while he beguiles  
Our hearts with words of new-found fairy isles.

And so with him upon the sea's bright strand,  
Forgetful of the tide and of the wave,  
Like children there we builded on the sand  
Our cherished treasure houses. Ah ! how brave  
That heart ! As with the courage of a child  
He led us on, and all our hearts beguiled.

He takes us boldly past the harbor bar,  
And floating through the reefs and round the shoals,  
He shows us where the wrecks of winter are,  
All through the summer seas ; and where men's souls  
Lie wrecked, he steers straight on, through darkest night  
And starless skies, led by an inward light.

No wandering fire he follows. Nay ! that heart  
Turns like a compass to life's constant source.  
Though danger threaten us on every part,  
And sun and stars should fail, the secret force,  
That fills the world with light and life and love,  
Holds true his heart, which tempests may not move.

Fate's wheel, just touched, moves hidden chains that rule  
The lives of men ! Our captain owns no whip  
But strength in gentleness. If some poor fool  
Be rashly mutinous,—as on our ship,  
Alas ! so many are,—each foolish heart  
He chides, unrolling wide life's fateful chart.

Gladly we give him service. Let us keep  
This last long watch with him ! The night is come,  
The sails are set upon an unknown deep.  
That light which led us outward from the home  
Our fathers made he ne'er may see again :—  
But he hath set new fires within the hearts of men !

Well may we bear him tribute. Golden sails  
Take forth our treasure to the sunset sea.  
The strong sweet wind that swells them never fails,  
And with a braver faith, our hearts shall be  
Upborne by that pure breath which in his words  
Still lives, as on great seawinds soar the gray-winged  
birds.

## TO A LAUREATE OF EMPIRE.

You sing to us the song of steam,  
And true romance ; our world is yours :  
You draw things as they seem ;  
What know we if the dream  
Dies or endures ?

You set forth with the rising sun,  
And watched your brothers as they wrought ;  
So they may read who run,  
You told of work well done,  
Battles well fought.

On every little thing and dear  
You set the mark of true romance :  
And wondrous true and clear  
The forms of things appear  
To your quick glance.

Out of the sunrise in the East  
You came and made our dreams come true ;  
And made us, great and least,  
Each man and boy, and beast,  
All friends to you.

We lived those dreams you made so real,  
Those songs of yours we long had sung :  
Our very hearts you steal ;  
What then ! You made us feel  
The world is young.

The world is young. You found it out  
While others swore 'twas sick and cold ;  
Our faith no man shall flout ;  
The things we care about  
Are never old !

\* \* \* \* \*

Then, in old jars you poured new wine !  
Though it was strong, we did not shrink,  
Unto our royal line,  
And all our rights divine,  
Long life to drink.

We dreamed the world was ours ; that draught  
Swift made it so—as in our vision.  
The cup of blood we quaffed,  
And at the whole world laughed  
With wild derision.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Lord of Hosts was with us still ;—  
Let pagans worship wandering Pan ;—  
So we, by His good will  
The heathen slew ;—we kill  
For the Great Plan !

We bade them turn and kiss the rod,  
Forget their passion and their panic,  
Forget they were downtrod :  
Nor see in our great God  
A Thing mechanic.

\* \* \* \* \*

Were your romance then but a mist  
To veil from us God's law and love,  
'Twere better you had missed  
The mark ; nay, in the list  
Ne'er thrown your glove.

Oh, better had our hands but shook,  
And spilled the wine ! Not now with laughter,  
But through our tears we look,  
Deep, deep within Life's book,  
Before and after.

Think you we have not understood  
The spirit of your spoken word ?  
We know the wine is good :  
Being our very blood,  
That you so stirred.

The wine is pure : but in the jar  
Were left the old wine's bitter lees,  
Whose bitterness shall mar  
The vintage new, while war  
Still taints the seas.

O that our war at last may cease !  
That we may find new bottles then,  
Wherein the years of peace  
Shall pour the Earth's increase  
Of joy for men !

You praise our work : why then we'll pray  
For power to make, and better mould,  
New jars of sweet earth's clay,  
Those others put away,  
Men made of old.

## FULFILMENT.

THOU living God ! We know Thou art  
Within each truly humble heart :  
We know Thou dost not dwell apart

From perfect Love. Thy great love hath  
Shown us Thy wisdom's better path ;—  
How shall we hope to stay Thy wrath !

Thy fear hath shaken hands that reek  
With brother's blood, and still would seek  
To hold their birthright from the meek.

\* \* \* \* \*

What ! are we for ever fated  
On a dying world belated,  
Still to hate as we are hated ?

Are we still our brother selling  
To the death ? Shall love's upwelling  
Soul still find no earthly dwelling ?

\* \* \* \* \*

Hast Thou our brother's pleading heard,  
Since in our hearts the ancient word  
Of sacrifice hath once more stirred?

Once more to us a voice is sent,  
Crying from out the wild, "Repent!"  
"Repent!" and evermore "Repent!"

Ah! to repent were but remorse,  
Without Thy Love. A water course  
May rise no higher than its source.

We know Thou gavest length of days,  
Freedom to walk along the ways  
Of Thine own love—and for Thy praise.

We know, O Lord, the passing hours  
Thine angels are, with awful powers  
To make Thy life at one with ours.

Then spare us, Lord! if through the din  
Of wasteful wars we fail to win  
The way Thy wisdom leads us in.

Without Thy law of Love, Oh God!  
Well may we bend beneath the rod,  
Yea! bow our foreheads to the sod.

Ye sons of Abraham's true seed,  
Beware! the boast of blood and breed  
Shall fail you in your utmost need.

Up from these very stones shall rise  
True sons of God. Beneath these skies  
There is one law,—one sacrifice !

Hath He been offered up in vain,  
That Holy One ? Or was He slain  
Indeed ? Shall Christ not come again ?

Have we forgot ? Shall we forget  
His law of love ? Oh ! live we yet  
Under the law of blood and sweat ?

Thou God of Love ! Be with us still !  
Maker of worlds ! Make Thou our will  
At one with Thine. Thy law fulfil !

**A FRAGMENT.**

OUT from the garden where the birds still sing,  
Where beauty dwells among the budding roses  
And nodding poppy flowers that swiftly bring  
Their sleep upon us when the bright day closes—  
I am called forth. As in a dream I go  
To join that host who on the river's brink  
Worship the sacred stream. I may not know  
What measure is for me ;—nor shall I shrink.  
I fall upon the shore, and with my hand  
Make me a cup, and dip it in and drink  
To quench this burning thirst. Now on the strand,  
With steadfast gaze bent on that sacred stream,  
Comes one who holds a glass, wherefrom white sand  
And black commingled runs, whose dull grains seem  
Like falling seeds, to quicken with the birth  
Of coming life ;—and now it is no dream !  
For this grey sand, mixed with the moist sweet earth  
That banks the river up, brings forth rare flowers,  
And far along the shore, where all was dearth,  
A garden blooms : and fresh as morning hours  
And young as youth, goes forth upon the grass  
That shining one, who pours unceasing showers  
Of sand, both white and black, from a full glass ;—  
Whose name is Time.

## TIME.

—

TIME is the mighty master of us all :  
Upon his coming and his going wait  
Love, and swift death, and day and night,—and fate.  
Princes and flowers before his sickle fall,  
Who round kings' gardens made a prison wall ;  
Beggars by him are brought to high estate ;  
And his alone the skill to modulate  
Life's broken stops to measures musical.

O, love ! Though we may never hear the sweet,  
Full, final, perfect chord, yet this strange gift  
Is ours ;—even in one moment's breathless, swift,  
Heart-breaking pause,—to catch the throb and beat  
Of that immortal strain, which shall uplift,  
Through Time's long years, tired mortals' weary feet.

WITH BURNING HEARTS.  
—

WITH burning hearts for ever we aspire  
To pour love's precious metal, like pure gold,  
Within the lips of life's immortal mould.  
And though our hands have shaken with desire,  
And spilled some drops, and failed to make entire  
The perfect image ; even so, behold,  
We are Life's artisans ! The world were cold  
But that our hearts have burned with such a fire.

And since for beauty's sake my soul hath burned,  
Though I the perfect mould may never fill,  
Yet shall I feed that fire, with fire, until,  
When the great master's hand hath overturned  
The clay, perchance in these poor drops I spill  
Shall be my hope ; and I may not be spurned.

## WHEN GOD WAS NEAR.

LOVE, the great Giver, when on earth  
Some woman, midst the pangs of birth,  
First felt his joyous power,  
Gave her the two-fold dower,  
    Of grief, and mirth.

Through the fierce hunter-father rushed  
What joy, as first she smiled, and flushed  
Red as that fire she kept!  
What fear came, when she wept,  
    To hold him hushed!

What strange new power now held him bound,  
Whose strength was ever girt around  
With shadowy forms that rose  
In dreams, and with dark foes  
    Born of the ground!

With shapes of fear he learned to fill  
The woods and caves of earth, until  
Each rock and tree became  
A spirit, and a Name  
    Of good or ill.

What nameless Presence, shining, bright,  
Stood for a moment in his sight,  
When first that mother smiled  
And wept ; and round the child  
Shone a great light !

Lo, when that woman felt the sheer  
Joy of Love's new-born life, the tear  
That came into her eyes  
Was Love's first sacrifice :—  
The God stood near.

The God who, born before dear earth,  
Our mother, through fierce pangs of birth,  
Brought forth hope's brighter flower,  
Gave her that double dower  
Of grief and mirth ;

When Zeus, who knew not woe, was dead,  
And Phoebus from the mountain fled,  
Out of men's growing fears,  
By the salt stream of tears  
That woman shed,

He made new life leap from the sod,  
And woke the buds on Joseph's rod,  
And with wild Orphic lays  
Led men unto the ways  
That Jesus trod.

He who made life made life divine,  
And tipped with holy fire the pine  
    Which from the darkest eld  
    Great Dionysus held :  
        In whose dark shrine

That fire of human hope once burned,  
Which came to earth in One who turned  
    The water into wine,  
    Who blessed the growing vine ;  
        And never spurned

That woman who had overmuch  
Loved, for the hearts of even such,  
    When at His feet they knelt  
    In love's true faith, first felt  
        His healing touch ;

Who to the little children said  
“Come unto me”; whose word shall spread  
    Wider than home or hearth,  
    Through all the fertile earth  
        On Love's wings sped.

He lived to bear the cold world's scorn,  
And brought new life to them that mourn,  
    And, to the weary, rest ;  
    Him, on a woman's breast,  
        Her love had borne.

And where her hands in life's deep urn  
First caught those fires that smouldering burn,  
Through all the long, dim years,  
Amidst men's ancient fears,  
We might discern

A temple rising, radiant, free  
Unto the earth, and sky, and sea,  
For all to enter where  
Dwells in the open air  
That Deity,

That Spirit, which still wandereth  
Up through the gates of life and death,  
Lighting the ways of men  
A little time, and then  
Gone, like a breath ;

Which, ever wandering like the wind,  
Our feet still follow, till we find,  
Almost beyond our reach,  
A wonder, in men's speech,  
A word, enshrined

In women's hearts ; a deathless spark  
Of Love's pure light, which yet shall mark  
The way the world must turn,  
Though the great Sun should burn  
Out, in the dark.

## NOTES.

<sup>1</sup> biferique rosaria Paesti."—*Virgil "Georgics."*

<sup>2</sup> We do the same as the men of Poseidenia, who dwell on the Tyrrhenian Gulf. It befell them, having been at first true Hellenes, to be utterly barbarised, changing to Tyrrhenes or Romans, and altering their language, together with other customs. Yet they still observe one Hellenic festival, when they meet together and call to remembrance their old names and bygone institutions; and having lamented one to the other, and shed bitter tears, they afterwards depart to their own homes.

Even thus a few of us also, now that our theatres have been barbarised, and this art of music has gone to ruin and vulgarity, meet together and remember what once music was.—*Aristoxenus of Tarentum.*





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